

The Uncommon Kingdom: Love

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Matthew 5:38-48

March 9, 2025

Discussion and Reflection Guide

This passage can be hard for us to digest

Read and discuss Matthew 5:38-42(NIV)

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

*Do you have difficulty with these verses? What makes it challenging?

*How have these verses been misinterpreted or misapplied?

*What does this passage say about how we handle being mistreated?

Peaceful subversion is one of Jesus’ many plans for changing the world

These commands are a strategy for motivating others to change.

*How do you recognize the examples above to be peaceful resistance? Can you think of examples from our current cultural context?

*What does this type of subversion require of us? What does it cultivate in us?

*How have you seen this strategy work in your life?

An ‘enemy’ is anyone you have a hard time loving

Read and discuss Matthew 5:43-48 (NIV)

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

*What do these verses say about our enemies? What are we to do?

*Who are your enemies -or those you look down on, those who treat you poorly or someone you have a hard time loving?

*What does the act of praying for our enemies do in our own lives? Have you experienced this?

Jesus challenged the belief that it was ok to hate your enemies

Instead, we actively love them.

*What does it really mean to love? What does that look like in practice?

*Why isn’t it enough to tolerate or even just ignore our enemies?

The way of Jesus’ love is perfectly calibrated grace and truth

We are complete – ‘perfect’ - as our heavenly Father is when we love this way.

*What are some of the ways we treat others when we don’t correctly calibrate grace and truth?

*What does ‘perfect’ seem to mean here?

*How do you sense the Spirit calling you to love and pray for an enemy?